

WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD MEETING (HYBRID VIA ZOOM)

Minutes

Thursday, March 3, 2022

1:30 pm

Present: Sandi Basel (Chair), Natalie Harkey, Billy Kennedy, Margaret Love, Max Ruthless, Patty Swartzbaugh, Melony Winkelmann

Present for the library: Monica Caruso (Watauga County Librarian), Jane Blackburn (Appalachian Regional Library Director)

Absent: Cheryl Angel, Carol Deal, Scott Elliott, Roberta Jackson, Laura Johnson

1. Call to Order & Welcome

Melony Winkelmann called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – Meeting from January 6, 2022

Billy Kennedy made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 6, 2022 meeting. Max Ruthless seconded. The minutes were approved.

3. Correspondence and Communication - None to report

4. Report of Watauga County Public Library – Monica Caruso (*See attached for details*)

Monica Caruso reported on extensive preparations for National Library Week, which coincides with the Library building's 25th anniversary. Some of the activities include:

- Displays in foyer with old photos of construction, etc.
- Staff gifts and recognition
- Virtual slide show with old photos
- Launching strategic plan that week as well
- Libby Learning Day – online e-book platform training

Monica also reminded the Board of several upcoming events:

- There will be a program on gender fluidity sponsored by NAMI on Wednesday, 4/6. The program is titled "Educating the Community: Queer in the High Country".
- The Library is co-hosting a Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours on Thursday, April 7 at the LaQuinta Inn & Suites from 5-7 p.m.
- Read and Share copies of Dr. Thomas Whyte's book, [*Boone Before Boone: The Archaeological Record of Northwestern North Carolina Through 1769*](#), will be available in connection with his book talk on March 26 as part of the Boone 150 author series.
- There is a fire safety training for staff on March 9 at 8:30 a.m. The library will open at 10:00 a.m. that day.
- Library Association virtual town hall on intellectual freedom Zoom for staff (in response to book challenges)

5. Report of the Regional Director – Jane Blackburn (*See attached for details*)

- Jane Blackburn reported that there is only one empty position in the region and it is a part-time Adult Services Specialist position in Ashe County.
- Wilkes County Board of Commissioners has approved the Interlocal Agreement with changes. Ashe County Commissioners has signed it and Watauga County Commissioners will vote shortly.
- The region is still waiting to get information about amounts allocated in State Aid Funding.

- In sad news, Regional Finance and Personnel Manager Tammy Holston's mother has passed away so there was no financial report to share at this meeting.
- Revenues and expenditures are on track, but an unexpected expense will be shown in the benefits expense line item as the state health plan has been increased by 24%.
- Ashe County has received a \$10,000 grant, which makes approximately \$108,610 in grant money received this year!

In technology reporting:

- In February, several public labs were completely replaced using PCs purchased with grant funds. More installations will follow in March.
- The IT department successfully completed a major hardware replacement and upgrade project involving all four network servers, firewall, and disaster recovery system. This project was necessary due to the age of some of the hardware and the need for increased storage space on our servers and disaster recovery system.
- ARL received approval for more funds from the Emergency Connectivity Funds (ECF) Pool. These funds would cover more costs for hotspots across all three counties. Many schools and libraries have had difficulty obtaining the reimbursements from the ECF thus far, so the deadline for reimbursement has been moved from June 30, 2022 until June 30, 2023.
- All 2021 Evaluations and 2022 Work Development Plans have been completed.
- The Strategic Plan figures prominently in all regional work plans this year.
- On March 17, the Regional Board will consider whether or not to extend ARL's Emergency Paid Sick Leave for COVID 19-related situations. All are encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted. Masking requirements will also be discussed at this meeting.
- In a brief report from Tammy Holston, she expressed thanks to all for getting timesheets in on time for payroll.
- Budgets will be updated next week for the Regional Board approval.

Highlights from Watauga County:

- We look forward to welcoming our new Youth Services Specialist, Oprah Whitfield, in early March
- Thanks to Miranda Boone and Grace Frazier, Social Work Interns, for presenting a wonderful diversity training on February 23.

6. Report of the Friends of the Library – Melony Winkelmann

- Melony reported that the Friends of the Library membership is now over 249.
- There has been a steady donation of money and books.
- In-house books sales in December and January earned over \$1,000.
- Doris Isaacs has received a plethora of CDs and is organizing a special sale in March of CDs for \$.50 apiece. She is taking book donations by appointment on Friday mornings. Appointments can be set up on the website or Facebook page. A flyer has been provided at the front desk enumerating donation requirements.
- 100 boxes of military history books have been donated.
- Big Book Sales are being organized for April 28-30, July 14-16, and December 1-3. Dates for book sales are listed at the front desk. The first day of each sale is for members only.
- Reading & Rolling Program is still being planned for the summer. Mary Sue and Pat Morgan will be looking for new leadership.
- They are still looking for cheaper, better storage for book sale books.
- Jane Blackburn suggested recognition of the Morgans for their dedication to the Reading & Rolling program, perhaps during National Library Week.

7. Report of Western Watauga Branch – Presented by Monica Caruso on behalf of Cheryl Angel

- A Social Work Intern is assisting with dementia/memory care kits for the collection. These will eventually be available for check out.
- A resource booklet that lists support groups and health care options for dementia patients is now available and being placed throughout the county in doctor's offices and other locations.
- Western Watauga Friends is working on a logo.
- The *Watauga Democrat* published a letter to the editor thanking the library for the event on 12/15.
- The Dementia Caregivers Group will be meeting on the second Thursday of the month from 2-4 p.m. at the Western Watauga Branch. Caregivers can bring the person they are caring for.

8. Old Business – None to report.

- Endowment Board has openings for local board members to participate.

9. New Business – None to report.

10. Adjournment

Billy Kennedy motioned to adjourn the meeting. Patty Swartzbaugh seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Love